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EXPOSITION
OF THE
EFFICIENT CAUSE OF REGENERATION:

**THE DUTY AND MANNER OF PREACHING TO THE UNRE-
NEWED; AND THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.**

BY JOHN T. DEMAREST.

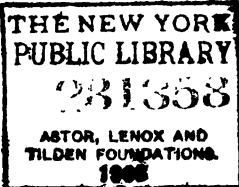
Revised Edition

"If any man speaks, let him speak as the oracle of God."

1. PET. 4: 11.

New-Brunswick, N. J.
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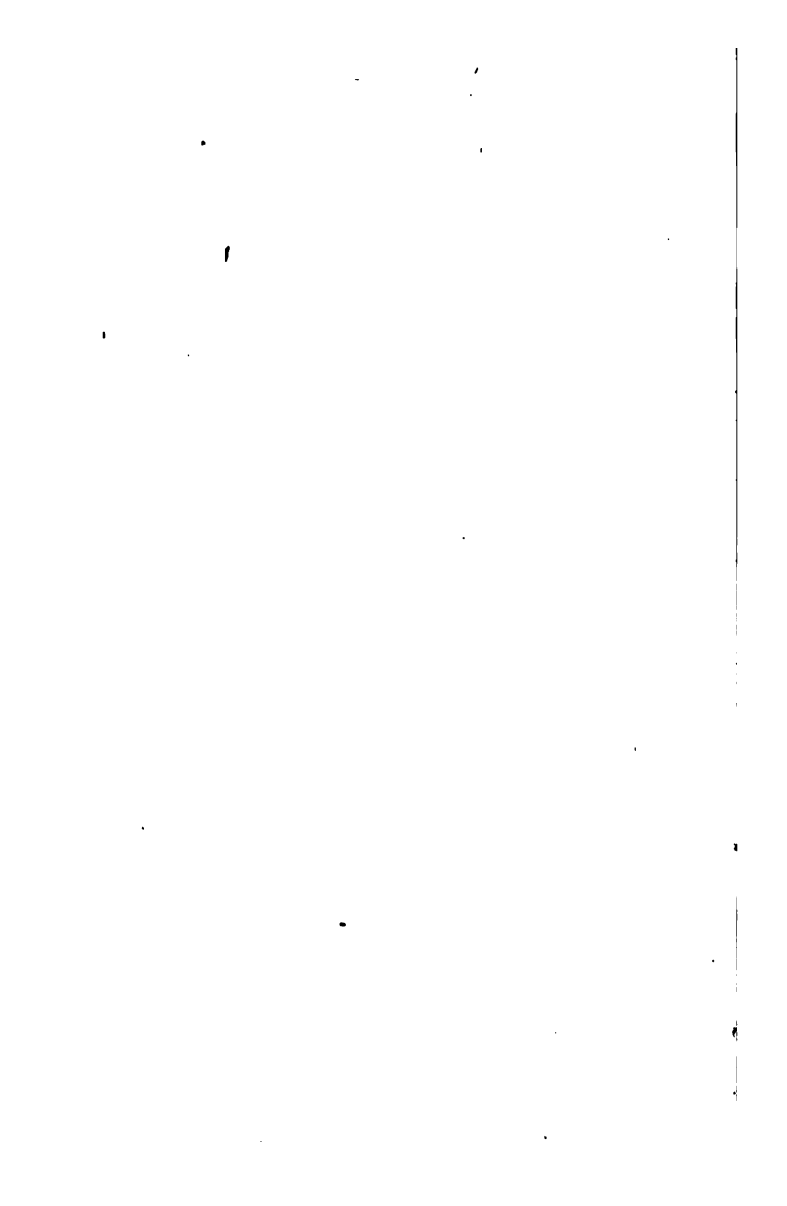
PREFACE.

These discourses are published principally for the sake of the congregation of which the writer is pastor. Had it not been for their request—they would never have perplexed the *compositor*. I do not offer this as an *apology*; for “if the work be good, it needs none; if bad, it deserves none.” The only principle taken for granted in the following pages is that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God.” If those who do not like the doctrines taught will clearly prove from the only infalible book that *they have no foundation there*, we will hasten with the same impetuosity to correct our errors as the famished tiger leaps on his prey. But until this is done we will “give place by subjection” to those who ridicule or caricature the doctrines of Paul, “falsely called” Calvin’s, “no, not for an hour.” We desire to cultivate the disposition of him who said—“we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.” The favor of man we do not seek, when the condition is, *sacrifice truth* if you would have peace. Neither, under such circumstances, do we regard his frown more than if a wasp were to alight on the finger. Such ridicule, though provoking, is transient.

“But all is in his hand whose praise I seek,
Whose frown can disappoint the proudest strain—
Whose approbation prosper even mine.”

J. T. D.

Shawangunk, N. Y. Oct. 1842.



DISCOURSE I.

"Who then is Paul, and who is Appollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Appollos watered : but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase."—1 Cor. 3 : 5—7.

Application of divine power to the heart necessary to the success of the gospel, and to the regeneration of the mind.

In the present day old exploded errors are revived, they have received a new name, and pass current in many portions of the visible church as the pure coin of apostolic truth, "as the faith once delivered to the saints." We will mention *one* of these errors—against which it is our design to bring forward the clear testimony of "the word of truth." Many, in our day, contend that men are converted through the truth—by which they have de-

clared themselves to mean that the Spirit simply presents divine truth powerfully to the conscience and affections ; but that hearers have it in their power after all to yield to its influence or not, according to their own will or choice. In other words, in the regeneration of the human soul, they consider the Holy Spirit purely as an eloquent orator, who does *all he can* to persuade sinners to comply with the terms of the gospel—which is the old Arminian doctrine of regeneration by Moral Suasion revived. From this it would seem to follow, that if ministers were only “as eloquent as the Holy Ghost, they could convert sinners as well as He.” This, one of the new-old teachers, more honest than the rest, roundly declared. The words of the text however teach a doctrine exactly the opposite of this. They assert the application of divine power to the heart whenever the gospel is successful, and state also what part ministers bear in this most interesting, important, and delightful work. This subject intimately concerns all ; for it involves in it the question, *what is necessary to the*

success of the gospel? for surely *that* (whatever it be,) which was needed to give efficacy to the preaching of apostles, and men of like gifts and character, must be equally necessary to the churches and ministry now, and to the end of time.

First. What part do ministers bear in the regeneration of men by the gospel? "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, *but ministers by whom ye believed*, even as the *Lord gave* to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but *God gave* the increase. So then neither is he that planteth *any thing*, neither he that watereth, but *God* that giveth the increase." The apostle in the preceding context is reproofing the Corinthians for *their sinful partiality to ministers*, and of *the divisions*, and *disputes which this improper preference occasioned*. In the first chapter he argues against this partiality in this way. "Is Christ divided?" that is, is not the whole body of the faithful united by one spirit to Christ? why then, such partialities and contentions among you about Paul, Cephas, and Apollos, who all declare

the same divine truth? "*was Paul crucified for you?*" You dare not think so. You know that Jesus alone "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." "*Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?*" were ye dedicated to the worship of an apostle, or to the one only living and true God? Be careful therefore how you ascribe the success of the gospel to ministers, even those of the first rank in the church; never forget that Christ purchased all saving benefits by his death. If this be not the apostle's meaning, what is? *The words of the text* are, if possible, yet more explicit on this point. "Who then &c?" Now, is not the undoubted meaning of these words the following—that *ministers* in preaching "the word of truth" are simply *instruments in the hand of God*, who alone gives success to his word,—ministers *by whom* ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man." "I have planted," I have preached the gospel in places where till then it was unknown—"Appollos watered," he followed by giving more instruction, "but *God gave the increase*"—that either of us

was successful was not owing to ourselves but to the *power of God* that accompanied and followed the word preached. Is not this the plain meaning? That it is so, the precision of the language employed forcibly shews; so also does the *inference* drawn by the apostle. "*So then, neither is he &c.*" The truth presented by ministers, either in their first or subsequent teachings, has *nothing to do with the success of the gospel*—as an efficient cause: "*God gives the increase.*"

Secondly. To *whose power* is it owing that men are "added to the church of such as shall be *saved*?" who gives the increase—the *will of man* or the *power of God*? what says the Holy Ghost in the text? "who then is Paul?" was he not the most eminent servant of Christ that ever lived? Did he not speak almost with the eloquence of an angel, although in modesty he disclaimed it, and reason with wonderful power, combined with winning tenderness? Yet does not the question more than imply that in producing the regeneration of men by his preaching, the eloquence even of divine truth as it fell

from his pen and lips, in itself considered, was powerless? "who then is Paul?" simply "a minister by *whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave, etc.*" That is, evidently, I proclaimed divine truth as the Spirit gave me utterance, but the success of the word was not owing to this exhibition of truth simply, but to the *divine power* that reached the heart, and bent the stubborn will. "Who is Appollos?" we are told in the acts that he was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures," yet the apostle concerning his preaching draws the same inference as he does with regard to his own. "So then &c. *As to the production of the effect spoken of—* the success of the Gospel "but *God &c.*" Men are *instruments* then which the hand of God uses to produce these effects. Now, does not good sense teach us that the *virtue or energy* was not in the instrument but in the hand that wielded it! Hence Baxter, with the same kind of spirit as Paul in the text, said, "I was but a pen in the hand of God, and what *merit* is there in a pen?" *The divine power* then is absolutely necessary to the

success of the gospel, as is clearly seen in the words of the text. Indeed, the Scripture doctrine on this subject is simply this: the Spirit of God is *the sole agent* of regeneration: "Born of the Spirit;" ministers and the word of truth which they preach are *the instruments*, or channels, *through* which his *divine power* is applied to the heart. Allow me to quote a few other texts in confirmation of this important matter. 1 Cor 1 : 21. "For after that—the world by wisdom knew not God, it *pleased God* by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Philosophy for four thousand years before Christ's incarnation, had attempted to find out the true character of the true God and the way of salvation, but they "stumbled like the blind at noon day," and "found no end in wandering mazes lost." Then it pleased *God* to save them that believe—observe he was the author or efficient cause of their salvation—and it pleased him to do it by the instrumentality especially of his preached Gospel. *His power* alone wrought salvation, but he *employed* means to bring

it about, viz. ministers and his written word: but the efficacy was neither in the minister, nor the word, but in the omnipotent energy of the Holy Ghost. 1 Cor 1: 18. "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us, which are saved it is *the power of God.*" *This is the reason,* says the apostle, *why* we believe and obey, and others do not. 1 Cor 2: 4—5: "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing (or persuasible) words of man's wisdom, but *in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, *but in the power of God.*" 1 Cor 4: 15.—"In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." He employed his divine power by my preaching the gospel to reclaim you from your lost estate. The efficacy of all, you see, is ascribed to *the Lord.*

Indeed, "men of like passions with others," "compassed with infirmity," are *employed in preaching the good news for the very purpose of demonstrating to believers,* and all who will candidly consider the matter,

that the whole efficacy of the gospel might be attributed to the right source—the *power of God alone*. 2 Cor 4: 7. “But we have this treasure in *earthen vessels*,” why? “That the excellency of the power may be, (that is may evidence itself to be) of God, and not of us.” Now if we have not proved, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the success of the gospel is not owing to any instruments employed, but solely to the power of God, it must be because we “do not receive the truth in the love of it;” and of such persons it is said that “God sends them strong delusions to believe the lie” their own depraved hearts have framed. Indeed, rightly to understand and appreciate this, or any other scripture truth, you must sit at the feet of Christ, like Mary, and like a little child, drink in the instructions of “Him who cannot lie.” “He satisfieth the poor with good things, but the rich he sendeth empty away.”

In the subsequent part of this discourse it is our object to show that in the work of regenerating the heart the Holy Spirit of the most High God does a great deal more than

simply to present truth powerfully to the human conscience, does more than to present it powerfully to the understanding ;*—that after this, if we are renewed at all, the spirit bends our wills, by his almighty power ; for if this be not so, man's will and power, and not that of God, is the cause or author of holiness. Now how does this agree with the multitude of passages which ascribes holiness to God alone as its author or cause ? "I am the Lord which sanctify you." "God is my strength and power, and he maketh my way perfect." "Thou hast heard the cry of the humble ; thou wilt prepare their heart." "The Lord will give grace and glory." "Thou wilt ordain peace for us, for thou also hast wrought all our works in us." "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in Heaven." "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness

* See Griffin on Divine Efficiency.

of sins." "A certain woman named Lydia—whose heart the Lord opened." "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hadst thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst "receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" "By the grace of God I am what I am." "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God." "Without me ye can do nothing." Now what is regeneration but the beginning of holiness? And the passages cited can mean nothing less than that God alone is the author or cause of it. Can any one read them and believe what many now affirm, that regeneration is by persuasion of the Spirit alone?

The peculiar importance and office work of the Holy Spirit as described in the word of God shows that those whom we are opposing "teach for doctrines the commandments of men." The office work peculiar to the Spirit is to sanctify, or make holy. "Take from the spirit that work, and you wrest from him all employment, and cover him from

creatures with an eternal cloud." "The Redeemer shall come to Zion.—This is my covenant with them saith the Lord: My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever."

"I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." "It is remarkable that the sanctifying Spirit is not represented as one standing and offering truth to persuade, but as an effusion, sometimes dissolving, sometimes refreshing or fructifying, sometimes cleansing, sometimes baptizing and consecrating." "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh."

"I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." "According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour." "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." "Cast me

not away &c.” “Uphold me with thy free Spirit.” Hear one remarkable declaration of incarnate truth, and let men cease their presumptuous theories and cavillings. “It is the Spirit that quickeneth—the flesh profiteth nothing.” “The natural man receiveth not, etc.” “Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.” Certainly somewhat is intended very different from mere persuasion. “He that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.” “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, &c.” “The Spirit shall be in you a well of water springing up to everlasting life.”

Faith and holiness are represented as the gift of God. “By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.” “Unto every

one is given grace according to the gift of Christ."

God is every where exhibited not as our persuader simply, but as our moral strength. "The Lord is my strength and my song, and is become my salvation." "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." "I will go in the strength of the Lord God." "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee." "Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." "Surely, (shall one say) in the Lord have I righteousness." Protection and his general agency in delivering us from eternal death is sometimes implied in the phrase, God being our strength, but certainly the principal idea is, that he imparts moral power to those who have no might in themselves. And "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool."

The people of God in all ages have prayed to Him not simply to persuade them, but to make them holy. "Quicken us and we will

call upon thy name." Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts,—and we shall be saved." "Unite my heart to fear thy name." "O Lord, revive thy work, &c." "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another and towards all men; to the end he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness." "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, stablish you in every good word and work." And, indeed, what does prayer, as enjoined in scripture, imply? Is it not worse than mockery for us to pray, if by that exercise we do not entreat God to do that for us which we cannot do of ourselves? The very act of prayer then implies that "all our sufficiency is of God."

The Lord positively declares that he will take away our hearts of stone, and put hearts of flesh in their stead. Jer. 24: 7. "Then will I sprinkle clean water, &c."—Ez. 36: 25—29. "I will give them, &c." This how-

ever, we are as positively told, does not exclude the wicked from blame. "But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord. Ez. 11 : 21.

In fact, the regeneration of the saved, God absolutely binds himself to do in the covenant of grace, Jer. 31 : 31—34. "Behold the days come, etc." How, then, after the Spirit of God persuades by the presentation of truth, can it depend on the will of man to accept or reject at his pleasure ? If so, the all wise and powerful Being is subject to disappointment ; his plan herein is frustrated, and of course he must be perpetually harassed. "The only wise," powerful, and "blessed God," he can not be on the conjecture we are opposing.

Let it be distinctly remembered that the theory we have thus far shown to be unscriptural is Regeneration by moral suasion, or persuasion. In other words, the opinion of those who assert, contrary to all the scrip-

ture so largely cited, that in regeneration the Holy Spirit simply presents truth to the mind, but when so presented, we have it in our power after all to yield to his influence or not, according to our will or choice. This theory makes God's Spirit a liar in three very remarkable passages; which, at the same time unequivocally declare that we are regenerated by the application of divine power to the heart. This we receive on the plain naked testimony of God. John 1 : 13. "which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Rom. 9 : 16. "So then it is not of him that willeth, &c., but of God that sheweth mercy." Ps. 110 : "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

And how does the theory we are opposing appear when compared with Paul's account of regeneration? Ep. 1 : 19, 20. and 2 : 1. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in

Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." If any can carefully read this striking portion of Scripture, and yet think that Paul in the least degree countenances the doctrine of regeneration by moral suasion—he must be either an infidel, or an idiot. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts to give, etc." 2 Cor. 4: 6. Is the order of Jehovah simply persuasion? No: "He speaks, and it is done." Take for an illustration of the truth in this matter, Saul when on his way to Damascus. His heart boiled with fury against the church, and Jesus whom he persecuted. While cherishing this heart of enmity against God, our Lord appears to him, and prostrate on the earth, he cries, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" what produced this sudden, this wonderful change? what made the heart of adamant a heart of flesh and love? Obviously, the divine power of the Son of God, which accompanied his address to Saul. But he was a "chosen vessel," one of Christ's people;

and how strikingly in this instance was the prediction fulfilled, "Thy people shall be willing, in the day of thy power?" But if this be so, are not men mere machines. I would to God that all who read these pages were such machines—animated by the Holy Spirit, alive and active in the service of our Lord. The words of the Father to the Son (see Ps. 110 :) do not read—thy people shall be made slaves, but shall be willing—shall be willingness itself in the day of thy power. The phrase implies that enmity formerly existed in their hearts, but now love produced by the power of Jehovah. And never, never does a believer exercise a freer act of choice than when he gives his soul away : when he commits it, as an invaluable deposit, into the hands of his Saviour for safe keeping. But the question is, what enables him to do it? The Spirit declares it to be owing to the omnipotent energy of the Godhead. Can He be mistaken on this subject, who "searcheth all things, even the depths of God?"

Allow the writer to ask if many disciples of Christ who profess to believe the truth es-

tablished from the word of God, have not
 been for a long time very inconsistent?
 Have they not leaned more on the power of
 truth, as presented by the ministers of Jesus,
 than on the power of the Spirit of holiness,
 for the success of the Gospel and the regen-
 eration of men? Is not this the great reason
 why our fleece remains so dry—that the dews
 of heaven distil not on it? Most certainly.
 For if regeneration be owing to the divine
 power of the Spirit, and if the Lord will be
 inquired of by the house of Israel for even
 promised mercies; and if prayer for the min-
 istry of reconciliation has been generally and
 shamefully neglected, what else could we,
 consistently with our own principles, expect?
 “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the
 heavenly calling,” “pray for us,” the ambas-
 sador of Christ, “that the word may run and
 be glorified.” Despise God, and you will be
 lightly esteemed. Honor Him, and he will
 honor you.

“Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw;
 Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw;
 Gives exercise to faith and love,
 Brings every blessing from above.”

But does not this subject tend to discourage those who are seeking in earnest the salvation of the soul? We reply with the apostle, that it is the principal, the only encouragement for them to persevere. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you to will, and to do of his good pleasure." And he must have but a very superficial acquaintance with himself who thinks by the power of his own will, or the strength of his own resolution, effectually to eradicate a single unholy disposition. But if the fountain be not dried up, can we prevent the streams from flowing abroad? Does not universal experience confirm the truth of the poet's words?

"Weak and irresolute is man;
The purpose of to-day,
Woven with pains into his plan,
To-morrow rends away."

To the battle then against your spiritual foes, leaning on Him who has everlasting strength. Then the Captain of our salvation will cover your head in the thickest of the fight; and you be "more than a conqueror."

DISCOURSE II.

" The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, &c. Ez. 37 : 1—14.

The duty and manner of preaching to the unrenewed.

In the preceding discourse we proved to you, from that infallible touchstone of truth, the word of God, that the application of divine power to the heart is necessary to the success of the gospel ; that it was so needed even when preached by Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. Also, that in the work of regenerating the soul, the Holy Spirit does more than persuade by the truth, that he makes the people of Christ willing in the day of his power, by bending the will in unison with that of God, and changes the enmity of the carnal mind against God into supreme and habitual love. It was shown, in the application of the subject, that this, the scriptural ac-

count of regeneration, does not damp our efforts, in seeking salvation, but is the great encouragement for us to do so. And we sought to impress on the conscience of the christian that the great reason of the small success of the gospel was owing to the fact that we depended too much on the exhibition of truth by "the pastor and teacher," instead of unitedly praying to "God," by the divine power of his Spirit, to "give the increase." In the words selected you have the vision shewn to Ezekiel by the Spirit of God, together with the interpretation of it. In the first ten verses the vision is described. The prophet is in a valley, full of bones; and, after walking about awhile in this valley, he finds they are "very many, and very dry." Suppose we were in a large open valley, where a battle, severe and bloody had been fought, and the dead bodies of the slain had been left unburied: the birds of prey, the worms, and the natural process of putrefaction having left nothing but the bones, bleached exceeding white by the sun and rains of heaven—how melancholy would be our thoughts

and feelings then ! So must have been those of the prophet in holy vision. While examining the bones in the valley, the Lord said to him, "Son of man, can these bones live?" A startling question ! No wonder the prophet, with the humility so characteristic of those taught of God, declined giving a direct answer, and said, "O Lord God, thou knowest." Jehovah now orders him to "prophesy upon these bones," and he does so. He first commands them to hear the word of the Lord, and then mentions what God had promised to do for them. While doing this he hears "a noise" and "a shaking," and "the bones coming together bone to bone," each to its proper original position or place. He perceives, also, "the sinews and flesh come upon them," "and the skin cover them above," though as yet destitute of "breath," or life. Then, as he was ordered, he says to the wind, "thus saith the Lord, come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." After this, "the breath came into them," and they lived, and stood upon their feet an exceeding great

army." *This is the vision.* The interpretation given of it by God, is contained in 12—14. verses. The bones are intended to represent "*the whole house of Israel,*" 11 v. They were carried away at this time captives in Babylon, and it seems despaired of restoration to their own land, though the Lord himself had distinctly foretold it, and the very time it should be accomplished. They seemed to have thought, in their unbelief, that the prospect of their return to their beloved land, the title to which was given by divine promise, was as clean gone from them, as if they had been already dead, and their bones exposed on the earth in the land of their foes. And by the wind is denoted the power of God and of his omnipotent spirit, which would be exercised in restoring them to the holy land. 12—14. The primary meaning, then, is restoration from captivity, and settlement in their own land. Their unbelief is rebuked by the vision strikingly exhibiting the power of God. He who has power to quicken the dead, does he lack power to do what he has promised to you ^{how} is,

mouth of his prophet? Never let us doubt either the resurrection of the dead, or the millenian state on earth; remember this vision. The power of God is equal to his truth. "He cannot lie." "He is able to subdue even all things to himself." That the resurrection in the vision was not designed to indicate simply a political restoration, or, a deliverance from captivity and residence in the land of promise, is evident from that part of the exposition given in the 14 verse. A spiritual as well as a political resurrection seems here evidently to be intended. That the vision refers to a moral resurrection, as well as political, will more fully appear by examining the predictions in the chapter immediately preceding; especially verses 24—28 and 31. In that chapter, as in this, the restoration of the Jews from Babylon, and of Judah and Israel, from their present and long continued dispersions, together with their regeneration and union with the visible Church of the Redeemer is clearly predicted. This God states once and again he would do, not for supposed goodness, (for their sins had

caused their dispersions,) but for the honor of his own name. To shew the Jews by what power, and in what way these great things would be accomplished seems clearly to my mind to be the design of this vision. (see 11 v.) Now how the Jews, as a body, are to be renewed and brought to the faith of the gospel we are told in Zech. 12: 10 &c. 'And I will pour upon the house of David &c.' Since then, the primary meaning of this prophetic vision relates to the restoration from Babylon, which was attended by a partial revival of religion; also to their restoration from their present wanderings, in which their conversion will be general, there can be no question but what we have a right to apply this as symbolical, or illustrative of the mode of the resurrection of men from the death of sin. The power of the Spirit employed in changing our disposition, and making us holy, is often mentioned in scripture under the figure of a resurrection. "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." "The hour is coming, and now is,

when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.”
 “You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

Considering the vision, then, as illustrative of the mode of the resurrection of men from the death of sin to the life of holiness, we remark, that *ministers of the gospel must address the unrenewed*, those “dead in trespasses and sins.” They must state that it is the duty of all such to exercise “repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,” without a moment’s delay. “Prophecy upon these dry bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, *hear the word of the Lord.*” The prophet, if he had possessed the same pride of reason with many of our day, would have said, Lord, thou knowest that they are bones—can my speaking to them be of any benefit? But the prophet was satisfied with, “thus saith the Lord.” Accordingly we find in many parts of the prophetic writings direct addresses to the consciences of the unconverted. Besides, ministers of the gospel have the same *divine warrant* in this matter

as the old prophets. "Thus saith the Lord," even Jesus, "who is over all, God blessed for ever," (Rom. 9 : 5.) "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The divinely inspired 'apostles certainly must have understood the precise meaning of this injunction. How did they address the dead in sins? Acts 2 : 38. "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." Here he states the duty of those who asked, "what shall we do?" 3 : 19. "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." 8 : 22. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness; and pray God, &c." 27 : 30. "God, now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." 26 : 19, 20. "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision; but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." 20 : 21. "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God,

and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." 16: 30, 31. "Sir, what must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Let any one read these passages, with the context of each, and it will abundantly appear that the apostles preached the duties of faith and repentance as binding on the unrenewed, their immediate and imperative obligations. When we, then, command you in the name of Christ to repent, be converted, believe in Jesus, and do works meet for repentance, we follow the example of the old prophets, the apostles of our Lord, and of Christ himself. (Mark 1: 15.) We have divine direction for so doing, the King of Zion gives us the command. Can any one bring forward a better reason? It does not depend on our option whether to refuse or obey. "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel."

But while the servants of Christ thus speak in his name, must they remind men of *their own inability to comply with such commands*, or be utterly silent on the subject? The right solution of this question is of the

last importance. Many teachers in the visible church are very sensitive with regard to this subject. They wish to hear nothing that appertains to it—except it tends to shew that they must close the lip on this point, or be so very cautious with regard to it, that all who hear them may instantly perceive that the preacher thinks it a frivolous matter. Indeed, they seem to think that the mention of absolute dependance on the spirit of God to enable men to repent and believe operates as a damper, that it actually prevents many from being regenerated. We are not going to speculate on this subject, nor employ any “philosophy, and vain deceit,” but simply refer to “the word of truth.” After the prophet had said, “O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord,” he adds, “thus saith the Lord, behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live, &c ;” which is explained by the words, “I shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live.” Now, here they are reminded that both their political and moral resurrection will be owing wholly to the divine power—to the Spirit of God. And if it was

not improper to remind the Jews of this, neither can it be for us to bring the same to your remembrance. And if our change from sin to holiness be owing to "the exceeding greatness of God's power," (Eph. 1 : 22 ;) surely, sinners should know their helplessness as well as guilt and corruption. They should be plainly told of it. Indeed, without a realizing sense of his own helplessness, who ever came to Christ, saying, "turn me, and I shall be turned, "hold thou me up, and I shall be safe?" That the apostles, our Lord himself, and those that had "the Spirit of Christ," under the Old Testament dispensation, taught unrenewed men their inability to comply with the terms of salvation, can be shown to all who reverence the word of God. First, as to apostolic preaching: Acts 2 : 39. When Peter had told those who "were pricked in their heart," to "repent and be baptized &c ;" did he stop there? No, he continues—"and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." "For the promise," (see 17—21 and Joel 2 :) of the spirit—"is unto

you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off," Eph. 2: 11—13, to Jews and Gentiles. Now here the motive for repentance is, the promise of the Spirit. Why was this agent necessary except to take away the heart of stone, and put the heart of flesh in its room? Why, if there were no "enmity against God" to be changed into love? "For the promise &c—as many as the Lord shall call." Peter then preached to them *the duty* of immediate repentance, that they were unable of themselves to exercise it, and therefore God had promised to regenerate both Jews and Gentiles by his Holy Spirit in messianic times; and then, that as to the imparting of this spirit, God acted as a Sovereign—"as many as the Lord our God shall call?" Truly, if some modern preachers had been present when the fervid Peter delivered that sermon, they would have been fearful that the mention of dependance on the Holy Spirit, for the right exercise of repentance, and especially of his sovereign operations, might tend very much to prevent the regeneration of the hearers! But of the

real effect no scripture reader need be told.

Acts 3: 19 with 26. Repent and be converted—when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. (see Zeph. 3: 14—20.) Here they are reminded of the author or efficient cause of revivals of religion, as before. At this time, too, he tells them that “God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” And how ‘of God Jesus is made unto us sanctification,’ can we be at any loss to discover when we remember that He promised to send the Holy Ghost after his ascension? Hence the apostle, writing to the Thessalonians, says: “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost.” Accordingly we find Peter, in the preceding discourse, (2: 13—21, and 24-33,) defending the miraculous power then in exercise by representing the spirit of God as their author, according to the prophecy of Joel; and by declaring that these effects were owing to the gift of Christ, after he had been raised from the dead, and ascended into



heaven, according to the testimony of David. (16: Ps.) "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Peter, then, tells the promiscuous audience, that miraculous gifts, and turning from iniquities are both to be ascribed to the Spirit as the proper agent, and to Christ as sending him for these ends. And ought not those who profess to preach the gospel now do the same? Do we understand our Lord's command better than the apostles did? Acts 8: 18—23. Simon Magus thought he might bribe the apostles by money to teach him likewise the hidden or magical secret of imparting the Holy Ghost by imposition of hands. He evidently appears to have thought that they had some demoniacal art, which gold, the unanswerable argument with the mass of men, would tempt them to disclose. Thus he dreamed of producing like excitement with that formerly existing in Samaria, and so of retaining the

people in the belief that he was "some great one." Now the duties of repentance and prayer for forgiveness were urged by Peter as instantly binding on him. But this was not all. He was told of the freeness of spiritual gifts. "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money." God gives the Spirit, you cannot bribe him. He was ordered to pray for forgiveness; now is not prayer a complete expression of dependance on the Creator? Can an accountable creature exhibit it more fully in any way? More still: "thy heart is not right in the sight of God." Your natural temper or disposition must be changed. "Repent therefore &c, and pray God &c." Your natural disposition is such that God cannot approve of it. The possession of this temper is a sin. "Repent therefore," &c. But, remember that God alone can alter it, or pardon you. Therefore pray. Pray, also, "for I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity"—pray, for you are a miserable sinner, and as enslaved or helpless as

miserable. Now, if this portion of revelation does not prove it to be the duty of ministers of Christ to urge repentance and regeneration as duties of the unrenewed, and, at the same time, to remind them of their own inability to comply, and of the necessity of the Holy Spirit to produce repentance and regeneration, we despair of proving any thing from the scriptures. We will cite but two passages more. Eph. 5: 14. "awake thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead," here you have the duty; "and Christ shall give you light," here is the promise of instruction. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," here is the duty; "for it is God who worketh in you to will and to do, of his good pleasure," here you have our inability, and the cause of good dispositions and acts, as well as the sovereign nature of the divine operation in human hearts "of his good pleasure." See also Acts 5: 31, 32. It is proved, then, that the apostles taught the necessity of divine influence to change the heart, the inability, as well as the duty of sinners,

and of unconverted sinners to become holy, and even of God's sovereignty in the matter. So did our Lord himself. (Jno. 3 :) witness his remarkable instructions to Nicodemus. Now that Nicodemus was unrenewed is evident from the fact that although he was a "master in Israel," he did not know what was meant by "being born again." If he had understood only Ezk. 36 : 26, 27, he would have instantly perceived that "the teacher sent from God," taught no new doctrine. Our Saviour begins by solemnly declaring the absolute necessity of this change for admission into the kingdom of God. Nicodemus understands him of a literal birth for the second time ; our Lord replies that the birth spoken of was not carnal but spiritual, that the spirit was the author of it, and baptism the sign of it ; and at the same time repeats its necessity for entrance into the true church below or above. This necessity he grounds on human depravity. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Sinful parents bring forth sinful offspring. "How can he

be clean that is born of a woman?" "A bad tree bringeth forth evil fruit." That "flesh" often means our corrupt nature, see Rom 8 : 7, 8, and Gal 5 : 19—21. We come into the world guilty and corrupt, but holiness is necessary to "see God." "And that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit;" that holy disposition of which the Spirit is the author, is like himself, spiritual or holy. Think it not strange that I said to thee, ye must be born again. Jesus, then, addresses an unrenewed person by declaring the nature, necessity, and author of regeneration. He tells him that the change is spiritual, and that the Spirit effects it himself, because all are born corrupt—unholy. Is not this clearly announcing the inability of the sinner to change his own heart, even though the duty is pre-
 ●mptorily stated? Let the candid and prayerful student of the Bible Judge. But this is not all. Our Lord further declares the Holy Ghost in the work of regenerating the heart, in giving a holy disposition, to be a sovereign agent, and that the manner of his

operation herein is incomprehensible. This he illustrates by comparing the Holy Spirit to the wind, the very image employed in the vision, which has suggested our remarks. "The wind bloweth—listeth—canst not tell," &c. Let those teachers who are so afraid of mentioning the hindrance of a perverse and corrupt heart to the real reception of Christ, and of the necessity of divine influence in regeneration, and of the operations of the sovereign agent, pause, and ask, whether the disciple be, as his Master, whether their instructions do not essentially differ from His. If Christ was right, they must be wrong. Allow me, also, to ask whether this kind of preaching or instruction operated unfavorably; did it prevent his regeneration? None who know his after history will say so. But lest some should be so very ingenious as to suppose that the kind of instruction given by Christ himself to an inquirer after salvation in private must not be told in public, we call your attention to John 6: 44. "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

Coming to Christ means faith, see 35 verse. That the discourse of which these words form a part was addressed to a promiscuous audience, among which many were unrenowned, the context will not permit us to doubt. See 22—26 vs. 36 v. 59. 60. 64. 66. Our Lord first tells them that their motive in following him was improper, 26. 27. Then they assume the attitude of inquirers: "what shall we do, that we might work the works of God? What shall we do to please Him? Jesus replied: "This is the work of God," this is acceptable to him, "that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent." Here the duty of believing on Him is unequivocally stated. Now they resort to cavils, and demand more evidences of his divine mission, 30. 31. and refer him particularly to the manna that fell from heaven. Jesus answers by declaring that the manna was designed to represent Him. 32. 33. vs. Then they entreat the Lord evermore to give them "the true bread." That they were ignorant of what really was necessary for this end, is evident from the fact that Jesus again states that the bread rep-

resented Him, and that faith in Him was necessary to spiritual life and nourishment, 35v. This faith he declares them not to have, although they had witnessed many of his miracles. And then gives as the reason, "all that the Father hath given unto me shall come unto me; and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." 37.* In which passage, spoken to unrenewed men, be it remembered—he states that all the Father gave him to redeem and purify invariably do believe; in others words, that faith in him is the effect of election, of the eternal sovereign love of God; and that all who do believe in him he will most cordially receive. We know it is not our business as ministers to say who is given to Christ by the Father; but the fact that men are so given, and so come to Christ, must be our duty—if our Lord said the truth. He proceeds by stating that the design of his mission to our earth, was definite and fixed, to do the will of his Father. This will is declared to be that none of those given to him by his Father, should be lost, but that every one would be-

*I hope it is not heresy to quote the whole of the passage.



lieve in Him, have everlasting life, and be "raised up at the last day," as an unspeakable privilege. (Phil. 3: 10,) 39, 40 vs. "Then the Jews murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread &c," and referred to his supposed parentage, his human nature as disproving his divine. And if, as they thought, he was a mere creature, they could not see the propriety or duty of faith in Him. Jesus replies, (44, 45,) "murmur not among yourselves, no man can come to me, etc." With reference to "the drawing" here mentioned, many interpret it simply to mean this, no man can believe in Christ, except he is induced, or drawn to Him by motives. No doubt, the Spirit uses the motives of the gospel: but the question is, what makes one fall in with these motives, and another turn away from them in scorn? The true scriptural answer is this: "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." "God worketh in us to will," &c. By the almighty energies of the Holy Spirit he quickens the dead in sins; he takes away our natural temper, (Rom. 8: 1.) which is "enmity against

God," and causes us to love Him. Our unholy dispositions must be changed, before the motives set forth in the gospel can work "effectually in them that believe." With a bad temper, we must, and do make a bad choice. That our Lord meant more than persuasion by motives is evident from the subsequent part of this wonderful discourse. 64, 65. "But there are some of you that believe not. Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come to me, except it were given unto him of my Father." Here Christ uses the words, "except it were given unto him by my Father," as precisely agreeing in meaning with, "except the Father draw him." "The truth," then, being judge, the interpretation we have opposed falls to the ground. Now, if the inability of the sinner to believe in Jesus, no less than his duty to do so, was not taught by our Lord at Capernaum, and if, at the same time, he did not state that God acted as a sovereign in the imparting of special, renewing grace; what must we say? Are not his instructions here too plain to be misunderstood? Or, will any say that Christ

was mistaken in these matters? If so, let them avow it, like honest men, and then we will know where to find them. But while we profess to believe in the divinity of Christ, and in the inspiration of the Scriptures, let none be so bold as to explain away the plain statements quoted. "Let God be true, and every man a liar." For if we cannot put confidence in the veracity of God, in whom can we trust? Will our philosophy be "an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast," when we pass the dividing line between time and eternity? And would it not be well for all who profess to be commissioned servants of Christ, to remember that they are bound to preach the same truths he did? "Thus saith the Lord, stand in the court of the Lord's house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the Lord's house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them: diminish not a word." Jer. 26 : 2.

Thus far we have shown that the apostles, and our Lord himself preached the duty of unrenewed men to repent and believe, and, at the same time, stated that they had no mo-

ral strength of themselves to perform these duties ; and also, incidentally, that the Spirit in renewing the heart is a sovereign agent. That those who had "the Spirit of Christ," under the Old Testament dispensation agree in teaching the same, remains to be illustrated. We will add one proof, but that, we hope, will be a decisive one. Josh. 24 : 14—27. The duty of the nation as such is expressed in verses 14, 15, 23, their inability of themselves to comply with it, and the necessity of reliance on the sacrifice of Him whom their sacrifices were designed to represent, is solemnly stated in the 19 verse. "And Joshua said unto all the people, ye cannot serve the Lord : for he is a holy God ; he is a jealous God ; he will not forgive your transgressions, nor your sins." Why is this passage overlooked by those who so often quote the others ? (see also Prov. 1 : 23.).

Application : If these things be as you have said, why preach at all ? We reply by mentioning inferior or secondary motives first. We preach because it has pleased God by this means to restrain much depravity

from breaking out into horrid and enormous crime. Suppose the doctrines and motives of the gospel were not proclaimed;—suppose that all the ministers of Christ were to die during this generation, their places not being supplied by others; suppose the next generation to grow up wholly ignorant of divine truth; all the bibles being extinct and all the pious dead, and none to follow them; imagine all this to have taken place, and who can tell what scenes of anarchy and bloodshed the rulers of the land and the world might witness; if indeed there would be any rulers! Fancy, herself, shrinks back from the dread panorama, “with fear and trembling.” And well she may, for the infidel revolution in France is not yet wiped from the historic page. Well she may, for the crimes of the heathen are not yet forgotten. This did not escape the observation of the poet, “by God’s own hand anointed.”

“The pulpit, (when the satirist has at last,
Strutting and vap’ring in an empty school,
Spent all his force, and made no proselyte,)—
I say the pulpit (in the sober use

Of ~~the~~ legitimate, peculiar powers,)
 Must stand acknowledg'd while the world shall
 stand,
 The most important and effectual guard,
 Support, and ornament of virtue's cause."

And is it folly to be thus instrumental in serving our country? Again: we preach the gospel, because the fact that you lack moral strength of yourselves to regenerate the heart, repent and believe in Jesus is no good excuse for the neglect of such duties. You have understanding, will, and affections; you are capable of loving. But the reason why you do not "repent and turn to God," and do works meet for repentance, is owing to the temper or disposition of the heart. This is "enmity against God;" and while it remains so your choice must be wrong; but does that free you from the obligation of loving Him? Surely not. This inability is no good excuse, because God promises to remove it for "all who call upon him in truth." "Ask, and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find &c." "For every one that asketh &c." Therefore turn instantly to God, give your soul into the hand of Christ, and evermore

pray, "create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit within me." Make my heart right in thy sight. The principal motive urging us to preach the gospel to the unrenewed is that He who has given us our instructions in his written word commands us to do so, coupling with the command a most animating promise. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, &c. (Mark 16: 15.) Go—teach (or disciple,) all nations—so teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; here are our instructions; shall we refuse to obey Him who has all authority in heaven and earth? (Matt. 28: 18, 19.) Let it not be thought of for a moment. "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Here is our great encouragement. Jesus will be with us to protect us by his providence, and to render the gospel efficacious by his Spirit. Why, then, should we be discouraged? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" While we prophesy over the slain the Spirit of God enters into the heart, and Jesus thus gives the beginning

of eternal life to "as many as God has given him." (Jno. 17: 2. 5: 21, and 11: 25.) "It has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Thus the Lord gathers his chosen ones out of every nation under heaven; thus he brings them "in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." So he makes them "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Then all who believe and obey Him will constitute "a glorious church," &c. [Ep. 5: 27.] "Come," then, "from the four winds &c," that we may be quickened, and that Israel may stand up—"an exceeding great army."

DISCOURSE III.

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him ; in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace.”—Eph. 1 : 4—6.

The Scriptural doctrine of Election briefly stated and vindicated.

We know full well that a most unpalatable truth is contained in these words. Few, even of the professed servants of Christ, relish it. Neither are we ignorant of the fact, that many judge it best not to have it stated to any promiscuous audience, even though it be true. But the question is not what this or that man, this or that community, thinks and judges of its usefulness, or the contrary, but what are “the words of the Holy Ghost?” Is not election a tenet decidedly taught in the scriptures? If so, is not the Spirit of God *the best judge* of what should be read, stu-

died, or preached? And ought not scriptural truth to be explained, defended and applied in its proper order, proportion, and connexions? "Buy the truth, and sell it not," is the divine direction. We frankly admit that this doctrine has been often improperly stated. But is that a reason why it should be *utterly withheld*? No: he who explains it as does the Holy Spirit, and as *often* as he does, should not be despised, unless we wish to pour contempt on Him, one of whose offices it is to "glorify Christ." Any one who objects to this mode of treatment virtually claims to be wiser than "the only wise God." But "shall any man teach God knowledge?"

We shall, first, explain the scriptural doctrine of election. Election is a branch of the general subject—the decrees of God. "Known unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world." The decrees, when they relate to men, are called by the general term, predestination, or fore-ordination. Election and Reprobation are branches of predestination. Our attention is to be confined to the former. The term elec-

tion simply means choice. 1st. The election of God is *national*. The Hebrew nation, as such, were chosen by Him. This none will dispute. (see Isa. 45: 4, and Ps. 165: 43, and the Pentateuch every where.) Now many of the Arminian writers and preachers maintain that this is the only election taught in holy writ. The truth or error of this will be examined presently. Meanwhile this admission must not be forgotten.

And here allow me to ask, if it be not owing to the national election of the Good Being that we, as a people, have been so long and richly favored with the privileges of the gospel, general education, peace with all nations, civil and religious freedom? "God hath not dealt so with many a nation:" and if we have not assigned the *true* reason will not some one pity us, and enable us to find what we love above our life—the truth?

2d. The choice of God has reference, also, to *individuals*. This is unceremoniously contradicted by a host who have read from their childhood the inspired epistles of Paul.

But "what saith the scripture?" None will deny that the apostles were chosen by the Lord, out of the number of those who followed him as his disciples. This, it is true, was an election to *office*, and not necessarily connected with salvation, but still it was a choice of *individuals*, made by "God manifested in the flesh." We leave those whom it concerns to reconcile this single fact with their peculiar creed. But there is a choice of individuals made by God for the purpose of bestowing grace and glory. If this is false, Paul was mistaken. Rom. 9 : 10, 11. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." 13 v. "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Now, if a child in the womb be not an *individual* will some one tell us *what* he is? And if the purpose of God, according to election was not exhibited by "loving Jacob," we ask how it is possible even for the Almighty himself to manifest any purpose? The kinds of election, then, mentioned in

scripture are national and individual. National election does not secure the everlasting salvation of all in the community, as the history of the Hebrews fully proves; but it does secure many and great temporal mercies. There is, also, an individual election to office, not connected with holiness or eternal life. So Judas Iscariot was chosen to be an apostle, though he was "a devil." Thus Balaam prophesied, though he "loved the wages of unrighteousness." But there is, also, an individual choice for the very purpose of bestowing grace and glory. So it was with Jacob and Paul, whom God declares to be "a chosen vessel unto himself;" and who we know had grace, as well as the favor of being an apostle, inferior to none. These distinctions have been made, because they are scriptural, and help to clear away some of the rubbish that has been industriously collected around this subject, and also, to shew the inconsistency of those who admit a national, but deny an individual election. Such persons often charge those who oppose their sentiments with bigotry, and such like dis-

positions. But, certainly, those who throw the weapons of theological warfare should not poison their arrows. Candour and modesty become all who profess to search for truth. Let all who think candidly ask, whether the same principle is not involved in national as well as individual election? Why did God select the Hebrew nation, give them a revelation of his true character, and “suffer all other nations to walk in their own ways?” A consistent Arminian would say : He chose to do so. Now if they assert that it is partial and cruel for Jehovah to make an individual choice, then we declare, on the same ground, that his national choice is equally partial and cruel. For the very same principle is involved in both, viz. the sovereignty of God, or his right to do as he wills with his own. Now, if this fact does not make it evident that the opposers of individual election are inconsistent, it must be because the apostle was not inspired ; for he asks with emphasis—“has not the potter power over the clay, to make one vessel to

honor, and another to dishonor?" As if he had said: has not the Lord of all as much sovereignty as a potter? Is He destitute of the very faculties which he imparts to his creatures?

These things being premised, we proceed to a brief statement of the scriptural doctrine of election. We consider it to be a choice of individuals made by God, in Christ, out of regard to the merits of the Saviour, and the promises of the Father to him; a choice made from eternity; made, too, without any regard whatever to any good disposition or conduct of man; a choice in which the means and the end are inseparably connected; a choice, the principal design of which is to manifest his own glory—the subordinate ends of which are to accomplish the holiness of the chosen, and to remove far off every foundation stone on which Pride might build her temple in human hearts. That the choice of individuals is "*in Christ*," the text clearly states. "According as he *hath chosen us in Him*."—See also 2 Tim. 1 : 9. Our Lord taught the same truth. "*All that the*

Father hath given to me, &c." Hence he is represented as pleading for such "on this wise;" "deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom."

1st. This choice of individuals by God in Christ is from eternity. The scripture is not ambiguous on this point. Matt. 25: 34. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" that is, obviously, prepared for you before your existence, or the creation of the world, and, of course, from eternity. 2 Tim. 1: 9. "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling—according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Tit. 1: 2. "In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began, also Eph. 1: 4. These passages of holy scripture are so very plain that we must either deny the writers of them to have been inspired, and so virtually enlist in the deistical army, or receive as certain truth the doctrines taught in them.

That God's gracious choice in individuals is from eternity is evident from the very nature of God—from the nature of his knowledge and choice. Our God is the great, the incomprehensible I AM; the eternal, without beginning of days, succession of time, or end of life. He is "the same, yesterday, to day, and forever." "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." With God then, there is no such thing as what we call time—the whole panorama of the universe is ever distinctly before his eye. If Jehovah then ever chooses at all, it must from his very nature be an eternal choice. He exists not either in space or time; therefore his knowledge and choice can, strictly speaking, have no relation to either. Every thing he does bears the stamp of his own nature—the mysterious label affixed on all is—eternity. If God, then has chosen individuals of our race for the purpose of giving them grace and glory (as we have proved,)—this choice, from the nature of the case, must be from eternity; it must, as the apostle Peter says be, "according to

the foreknowledge of God the Father."

2d. But what is the impelling cause of election? What is the motive or that in the mind of the invisible which moves him to make this choice? We reply that it is not in consequence of any foreseen faith and repentance, or any other quality, natural or acquired, in man, but solely in consequence of the good pleasure of God's goodness. The inspired penmen declare the same thing. And no Christian should be ashamed of that which Christ himself taught and acknowledged. Matt. 11: 25, 26. "At that time," (it was just after he had denounced the woes on Chorazin and other cities,) "Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." 1 Cor. 1: 26—28. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God

hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are." Here we clearly see that so far from any thing foreseen in man being the motive of his election, that God acts on a principle totally different. Rom. 9: 11. "*The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth.*" 18 v. "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy." "According as he hath chosen us in him"—why? Because we were holy, or foreseen as such? No such thing. But for the express purpose "that we should be holy and without blame before him." In love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. Eph. 2: 8—10. "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: *not of works*, lest any man

should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." See also 2 Tim. 1 : 9. The Holy Ghost, then speaking in the scripture, re-echoes the truth of this second proposition, beyond all reasonable debate. Here let it never be forgotten that when the good pleasure of God is assigned as the only motive forth is choice, our object, like that of the sacred writers, is to declare that it is not founded on any goodness of the creature, and so to exclude boasting. The good pleasure of God, however, is not caprice, but choice founded on principles of absolute and eternal rectitude, for the will of God springs from the holiness of the divine nature. And this remains so whether we are able or not to assign the reasons for his procedure in this matter. "Touching the almighty, we cannot find him out." "He giveth no account of any of his matters." After any truth is clearly established from the word of God, how dare any, virtually, bring the Almighty to their tribunal, and, with impudent blas-

phemy, ask—"what doest thou?" Or, why doest thou thus? "Thus saith the Lord," should silence forever all our boasted reasonings.

3d. In this choice of God, of which we are treating, the means and the end are inseparably connected. These means are holiness and faith, the end is salvation. 1 Pet. 1: 2. "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through (or, by means of) sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." 2 Thess 2: 13. "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation," (here is the end;) through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." (or faith.) Here are the means. Jno. 10: 26 and 27. "But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Does not our Lord in these words explicitly declare that his people are a holy people? In his view, are not the means and the end

inseparably connected? But could He who lay from eternity in the bosom of his Father be mistaken on this subject? Perish all such thoughts in christian breasts. Rom. 8: 28-30. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here the admirable scheme of electing love is concisely but comprehensively unfolded. The origin of all is the purpose of God, or, as stated in the 39th verse, "the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The means employed—the predestinated means—is conformity with the image of Christ, or holiness. The end had in view is glorification, or complete and everlasting deliverance from all the consequences, and the very in-being of sin. "What shall we say then to these things?" Is the knowledge of the apos-

tle on this topic, derived from the spirit of truth, worth no more than the conjectures of other ingenious men? It must be so, if the Calvinistic sentiments are considered erroneous and fatal. See also Eph. 1 : 4. Chalmers, we think, has given a striking illustration of this branch of our subject. Paul was assured by the Lord, when on his voyage to Rome, that though they should suffer shipwreck, yet none on board should perish. This was the revealed purpose. See Acts 27: 21—31. "And as the shipmen were about to flee out the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." Here was the revealed means of attaining the end. Both were inseparably united in this, as they are in all the purposes of God.

From the truth just established from scripture the futility of a certain class of objections can easily be perceived. Such as the

following—"If I am to be saved, I will be saved, do what I may; and if I am to be lost, I will be lost, do what I can." The answer to all such impertinent trifling is that the means, holiness and faith, and the end, salvation, are infallibly united in the divine purpose regarding the elect. All whom the Father has given to his Son do come to Christ by faith—they do follow him. They cannot but love Him who first loved them. This class of objections then is based on a perversion of the true doctrine of scripture, and are worthless "as the chaff which the wind driveth away." But allow me to ask if we act in this besotted and insane manner with regard to other matters in which the purposes of God are equally concerned? Does the farmer say, if I am to have a crop, it will certainly come, even if I omit planting or sowing? If he did, all would instantly say, the fool deserved to have nothing in harvest. And how dare any of us expect that when we "sow to the flesh," we shall reap eternal life instead of corruption? Are we not com-

manded to "be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord?" But why, if not the appointed means to attain earthly and spiritual prosperity?

"Why all this toil for triumphs of an hour?

What though we wade in dust, or soar in fame;

Man's highest portion ends in 'here he lies,'

And 'dust to dust' concludes his noblest song."

Why act like ants in one particular? We mean, in collecting all your days small particles of earth; wealth which the moth doth coirupt, which flies as an eagle towards heaven; and which often drowns men in destruction; and honor which the tongue of an arrant fool can blacken and destroy. Oh, turn your attention and iron perseverance to things of infinitely more importance. Enter in by the door, Christ Jesus, into the sheep-fold. Thus you will begin to walk on in the highway of holiness—the only way, the predestinated way to heaven. Oh, beg of God, by his Holy Spirit, for Jesus' blood, to impart this holiness to you. Without it, you are undone; for "without holiness no man shall see God."

4th. The final cause, end, or design of God in his gracious choice is, principally, for the promotion of his own glory. "Jehovah hath made all things for himself." He himself is of necessity, the ultimate end of his whole creation. The manifestation of the moral character of God, especially of his mercy and grace, is the prime end. "Having predestinated us—according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace." And is any reader, any one in the universe, able to assign a nobler end than this? The holiness of those given to Christ is another design of his choice. "According as he hath chosen us in him—that we should be holy, and without blame before him." And dare any in the wide dominions of the invisible assert that this is not an end worthy of God; that to reflect the moral image of the Holy One is but a frivolous matter?

Another end of God in this choice is that pride might forever be demolished in human hearts. Or, as the apostle expresses it, "that no flesh should glory in his presence," 1 Cor. 1: 26—29. Our salvation is wholly of grace;

if this does not exclude boasting, will some Arminian tell me *what can?*

Having now briefly explained the scriptural doctrine of Election, it is our object to show that incontrovertible facts, as well as the sure word of God, confirm what has been written. 1st. The truth explained is conformable with the analogy of God's moral government. One infant is born in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church; he drinks in superstition surely, in many cases, fatally,—for “the priest completes what the nurse began.” Why was this child born in circumstances so unfavorable to the discovery and love of “the truth as it is in Jesus?” We think the only sensible answer to be—“even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” Another child looks on the beautiful world, and soon hops along nimbly and happily as the robin; but, though in a christian land, his parents are both avowed infidels. The Bible is not as much thought of as the novel fresh from the press, or “the cunningly devised fables” of the pagan theology. Often, it may be, is that name blasphem-

med, at which they tremble in the lowest caves of hell. Why was this child brought to see the light so fearfully surrounded by the atmosphere of a disease, more contagious than the Cholera? Let those who oppose our sentiment answer. One child has rich and influential parents and relatives, and lives as a prince in the world; those of another are poor, so poor that the food of to-day is consumed before that of to-morrow is obtained. Some are embraced from their earliest days by pious parents, they have been given to God before their birth; and very early presented on the arms of faith to the care of a covenant-keeping God "in the great congregation;" they have been taught, too, in the book of life, and prayers have ascended for them every day. Are not these stubborn facts? And do they not unequivocally manifest the election of Divine Providence? Why then should many seem to be so horror-stricken when they read or hear of the election of Grace?

2d. We shall now adduce what may be termed the historical argument in favor of

election. Though all the angels were originally created holy yet some of them sinned, and kept not their first estate. Others, however, did, who are to this day confirmed in holiness. To these last the inspired writer refers in the well known passage: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels." We conclude, therefore, that the others fell because not included in the decrees of God. If this be not so, why were the influences of the holy Spirit withdrawn from them? And how, I ask, can beings perfectly holy, possibly commit sin when "the pure river of the water of life" is rushing perpetually into their hearts? Rev. 22: 1. And how could any of them, with any regard to truth, be denominated elect angels, if the others were not the rejected ones? Is not rejection implied in the very act of choice? Glance your eye for a moment to the Old Testament history. Abel was righteous; why did not the Spirit renew Cain? The Lord called Abraham out of his country and kindred, gave him many promises, and filled his heart with grace? Was he then better

than the rest of his kindred—did the choice of God rest on that? Noah was the only righteous man in that generation; but could not that Spirit who made him holy, with the same ease, renewed every man then living? If the doctrine of election be false, let men give us a satisfactory reason why it was not done. Why did Joseph receive so many gifts and graces? Why was David lifted up above all the sons of Jesse, and his heart filled with confidence in God? Why was Isaiah permitted to feel and write so much of Him who is “altogether lovely?” Why was Jeremiah known when yet in the womb, and before, and ordained to be a prophet unto the nations? Why were the fishermen of Galilee made apostles, and not the wise, mighty and noble of the earth? Why is one person now renewed by the preaching of the gospel, and another left? “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” It is generally conceded that scripture history is one of the best interpreters of scripture truth; and if the historical argument be not in favor of God’s gracious individual choice, we despair

of proving any thing from "the oracles of God."

That the doctrine we are establishing must be true is evident from the very nature of the case. Salvation must be wholly owing to ourselves, or wholly to God. That salvation is not owing to ourselves is obvious from the universally admitted fact, that man is a sinner. But a sinner can merit nothing of God, or demand as a right eternal life of Him. We conclude then that "salvation is of the Lord," of Him alone. Now, if salvation be wholly of God, it must, of course, be the result of choice—for God does nothing at random. "He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." And this choice and determination of Jehovah, must, from his very nature, be eternal. "Why of yourselves judge ye not that which is right?"

Here permit me to remark that there is not so much real difference of opinion on this topic as one would suppose, after a superficial examination, among the *truly pious*. Many, I know, hate the truth, even when scripturally stated. To them, of course, I do not

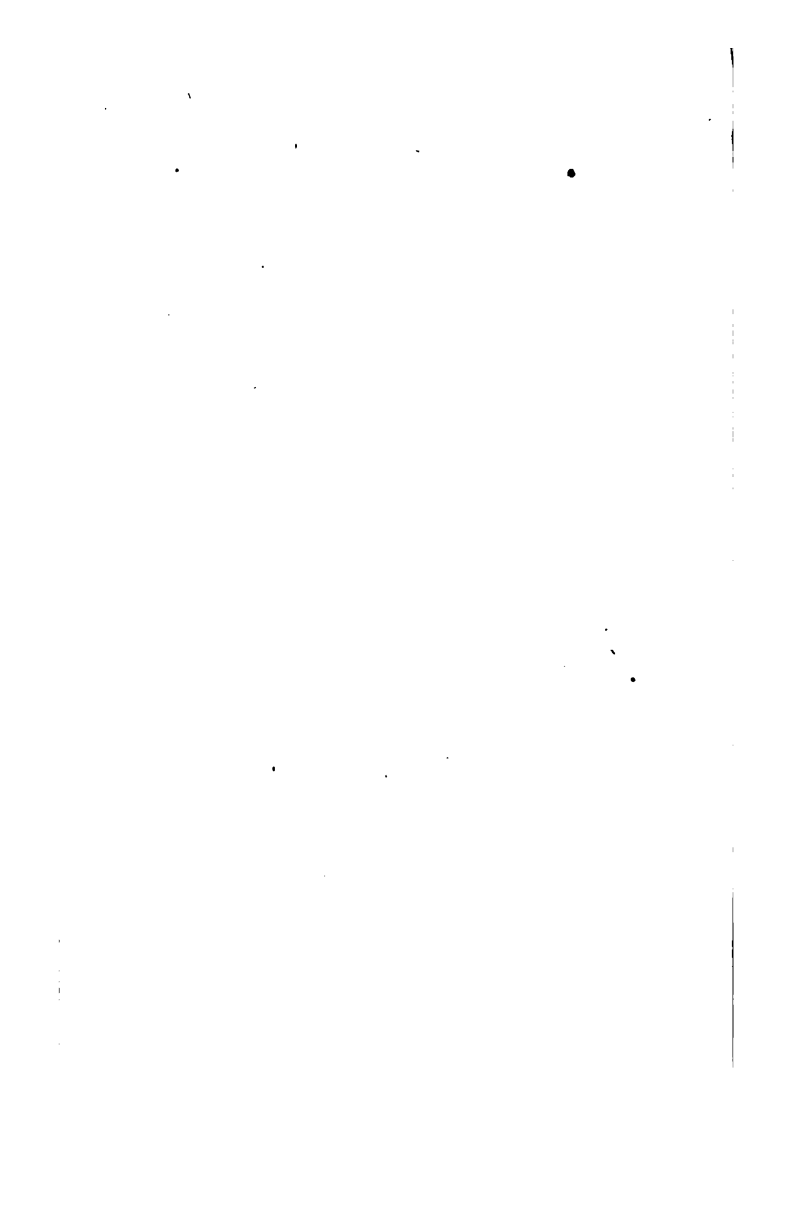
refer. But who is ignorant of the prejudices of education, and of the power of sectarian pride? I, for one, think that every real christian on earth believes with the heart in this scriptural truth. We give the reason. He acts as if he did, and action is the best proof of belief—it speaks louder and more to the point than a cataract of words. Allow me to mention a fact in confirmation of this remark. The late Joseph Eastburn of the Mariner's Church in Philadelphia, was once visited by an Arminian Clergyman, who proposed to him the following question: Brother, do you really believe in the doctrine of particular, unconditional election? Certainly, replied the other, and so do you; for I heard you confess, not long ago, in public prayer, that you was a miserable, helpless, polluted, and hell-deserving sinner, and that if there was any good thing in you towards the Lord of Hosts, it was all owing to his mercy and grace—to the influences of His Spirit. Now this is an admission of the truth of the doctrine of election. Only you do not carry it out to the full scriptural extent. In which you err.

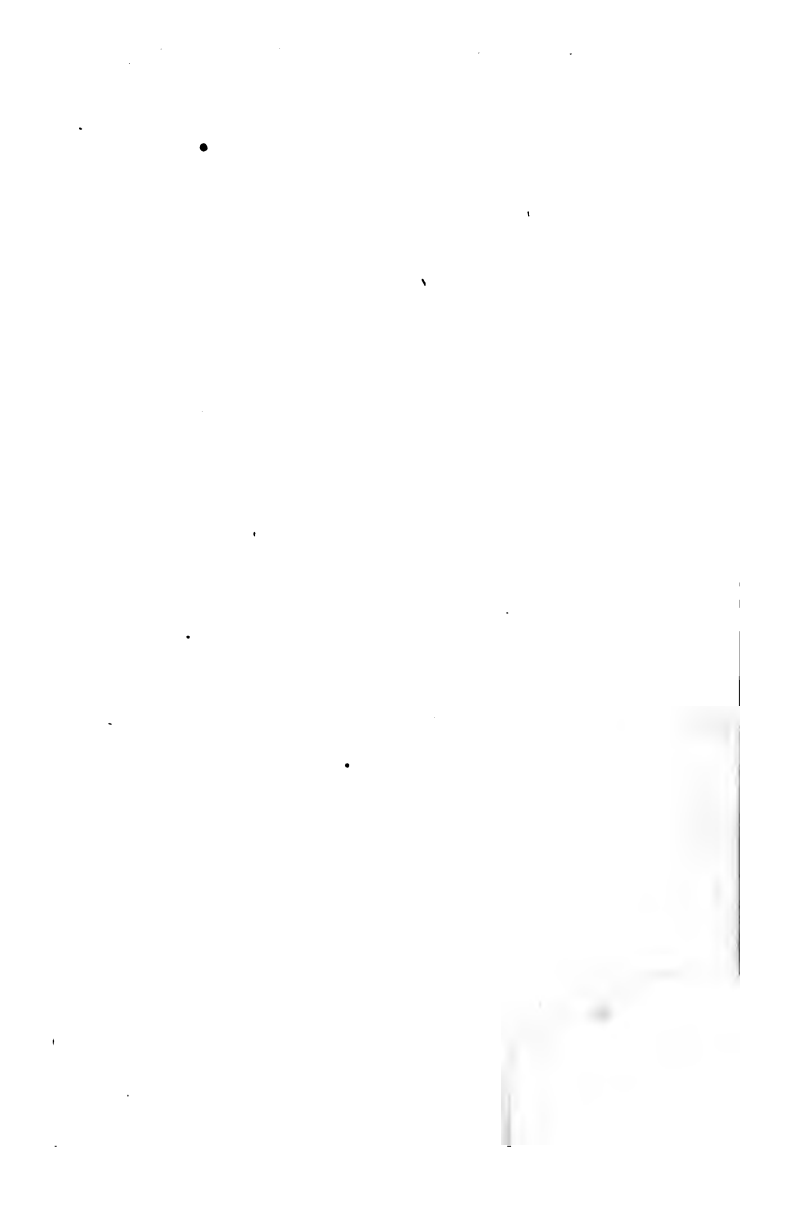
1st. In the conclusion of this subject, we remark that Reprobation (or rejection) is not the cause of damnation. It is however, the reason why God withholds the saving influences of his Spirit from many. "And whom he will, he hardeneth." Rom. 9: 18. Are not men "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" when the Good Spirit ceases to operate on their hearts? Why does the Lord allow it to take place in any instance? I content myself with the answer of the Spirit by the pen of Paul: whom he will, he hardeneth." But when did God so determine? The determination must, from the very nature of the case, be like himself, eternal. We preach, it is true, as Jesus did, of "his sheep," and He has told us that men do not believe because they are not of them; at the same time, we imitate him by saying—"If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall perish in your sins." "They that have done evil shall arise to the resurrection of damnation." Voluntary, deliberate, repeated acts of unbelief, and other sins, these lead to hell. Man is a soul-murderer—not God.

2d. The seeking sinner, or the discouraged believer, need not feel the last alarm because of the truth and certainty of this doctrine. For "God has never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain." How could he when this is one of the predestinated means of acquiring salvation? Hear the Great Teacher—the infallible one. Luke 18 : 7. "Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?" Does not our Lord here inform us that all who call with importunity on his father, out of a pure or sincere heart, for all things that pertain to the life of godliness are His own elect? Why then should the prayerful be chilled with horror? Nay, they should "abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. 1 : 10. "Brethren give diligence to make your calling and election sure." Subjective certainty is, of course, meant; for "The Lord knoweth them that are His." The direction is; prove your effectual calling, or regeneration first; and when this is scripturally settled, by diligent examination

of your temper and conduct compared with what that standard exhibits as "the fruit of the Spirit," then you ought certainly to conclude that you are "elect of God, holy and beloved." But not till then. Therefore, listen to the command of God. 2 Cor. 13: 5. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" He that is not united to Christ by a living faith has nothing to encourage him in that state; but he who is, has "the faith of God's elect." Tit. 1: 1. Arise, O God, establish the truth and holiness of the Gospel, that thou in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.







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